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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA/FPP AND NEA/ELA

DEPT ALSO PASS TO KCC; POSTS FOR FRAUD PREVENTION MANAGERS; ATHENS
FOR DHS/ICE AND DHS/CIS; ROME FOR DHS/ICE, DHS/CIS, AND DHS/CBP;
NEA/ELA FOR M. GREGONIS; CA/FPP FOR S. SEXTON

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SUBJECT: FRAUD SUMMARY - JORDAN

REF: Amman 001508

COUNTRY CONDITIONS

¶1. (U) Jordan is a developing country with a GDP per capita of \$5,100 and a population of over 6.3 million. Over 78% of the people live in urban areas and one third of all Jordanians are younger than

¶14. The service sector comprises over 66 percent of the economy, industry covers about 30 percent, and 2.4 percent is agriculture-based. Although Jordan's official unemployment rate is nearing 13 percent, unofficial estimates put this figure substantially higher at 30 percent. Scarce natural resources, poverty, inflation and unemployment are significant problems in Jordan, but over the past several years, the government has enacted broad economic reforms to improve the standard of living.

¶2. (U) Jordan is host to a significant number of Iraqis who have fled Iraq over the last several years for security and economic reasons. In May of 2008, the Government of Jordan imposed a visa regime for Iraqis which limited the number of Iraqis arriving in Jordan, although Iraqi business people and investors can now travel more easily to Jordan. The continually-improving security situation in Iraq, coupled with the wider availability of consular services at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, has resulted in a slight decrease in Amman's Iraqi workload. Over the past six months of this reporting period, April through September 2009, Iraqis still comprise 7 percent of Amman's visa workload.

¶3. (U) Jordanian-related civil document fraud is minimal as the documents contain many fraud-resistant features and adjudicators appreciate the reliability of both the civil-issuing authorities and integrity of the process. Together, these factors permit an easy verification.

¶4. (U) Post continues to detect a significantly higher rate of document fraud for Iraqi cases. Iraqi documents lack Jordan's high standards of quality control governing both issuance and verification. This situation, coupled by issues relating to security and infrastructure, results in a higher incidence of fraud stemming from Iraqi documents rather than Jordanian. Iraqi document fraud also involves widespread counterfeiting of primary identification documents, namely passports, national IDs, and other civil papers.

NIV FRAUD

¶5. (U) During this reporting period of April 1 through September

30, 2009, Amman adjudicated 14,672 nonimmigrant visas (NIV), five percent of which were Iraqi. Of the 128 cases referred to the Fraud Prevention Unit, 43 contained at least one counterfeit, altered or fraudulently-obtained document. Most Jordanian cases of document fraud are limited to poor-quality bank statements, employment letters and family registration books. But post occasionally interviews sports teams or entertainment groups who attempt to include "stowaways" for immigration purposes only and who are not bona fide members of the group.

¶16. (U) The FPU confirmed fraud in approximately fifteen percent of the nonimmigrant Iraqi cases referred to the unit for review. The fraud is a mixture of altered, counterfeit, and fraudulently-obtained documents.

¶17. (U) The K1 fianc visa category, particularly among Iraqis, is problematic because of the low bar for adjudication. Cultural norms permit couples to become engaged after the families meet a single time. In addition, tradition favors the selection of a spouse from the extended family because a blood and property alliance already exists. The K1 program provides an easy way for a family to sponsor a relative or neighbor to emigrate to the United States.

¶18. (U) Post has received feedback through unofficial U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) channels regarding the high number of Iraqi visitors who apply for asylum within one year of entering the United States. Specific groups in question include K1s and F1s. Post is currently evaluating last year's Iraqi B1/B2 issuances to validate their travel and has taken immediate action to address adjudication standards.

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IV AND DV FRAUD -----

¶19. (U) Amman adjudicated 2419 Immigrant Visa (IV) applications during this reporting period, of which 176 cases, or 7 percent, were Iraqi. FPU detected fraud in 60 IV cases, less than three percent of the total. Most Jordanian IV fraud is either relationship fraud, i.e., a marriage for immigration purposes, or some type of document fraud. The latter type often involves IR-1 and CR-1 cases where the Jordanian's alleged divorce from the first wife (which freed him up to adjust to LPR status by marrying an Amcit) is either not authentic or else not legally registered. Post also sees a similar type of fraud involving IR-2 stepchildren, where the biological parents are either not legally divorced, or else the marriage permitting the step-parent relationship may have been entered into solely for immigration purposes. Post notes that U.S. immigration laws that permit visitors to adjust to LPR status in the United States, in lieu of applying for immigrant visas overseas, contributes significantly to fraudulent immigrant visa cases.

¶110. (U) Post transmitted a spot-reporting cable in July (Reftel) regarding an internet-based financial scam where enterprising crooks duped a Jordanian accountant into paying over \$1100 to secure a U.S. employment visa and job in New York. Orchestrated entirely via internet and communicated by e-mail, the package included many features of the U.S. immigration visa process, including fees, forms, fingerprints, and even administrative processing. The perpetrators request payment in three different currencies, suggesting a global cooperative effort was underway to mastermind such a scheme. Post referred the case to law enforcement officials at post and suggested to the victim that he apply for the Diversity Visa program in order to legally emigrate to the United States.

¶111. (U) Post has identified a series of K3 cases where the Iraqi beneficiaries presented fraudulent Greek Orthodox marriage certificates, officiated by a priest in Amman defrocked by the Patriarchate for allegedly accepting bribes to perform illicit ceremonies. Although the marriage certificates clearly exhibit multiple fraud indicators, the FPU confirmed the authenticity of the Jordanian Foreign Ministry and Governorate wet seals. Post has notified the host government of this fraud trend.

¶12. (U) Post is increasingly concerned with the mounting sophistication of Iraqi document fraud. FPU confirmed fraud in fifteen percent of the IV cases referred to the unit and they range from high-quality counterfeit ID cards, to citizenship certificates, school transcripts, and civil documents - all of Iraqi origin. One recent example involves an Iraqi male K1 where the applicant first presented an ID card, produced using an outdated technology. When post refused to accept the document, he submitted a second ID card, which adhered to current technological norms, but other irregularities revealed it was a forgery. Post returned the petition to the National Visa Center and recommended revocation.

¶13. (U) Post notes cases where an Amcit IV petitioner may have obtained U.S. citizenship through a marriage undertaken ostensibly for immigration purposes. The Department, in consultation with USCIS General Counsel, has advised post not to pursue any possible denaturalization cases unless the person naturalized recently, i.e., within the past year or two. Post continues to bring cases to CA/FPP's attention where the petitioner appears to have obtained immigration benefits through fraudulent means, even though the matter may not rise to the level of USCIS General Counsel's acceptance of the case for possible denaturalization proceedings or review of the person's permanent resident status.

¶14. (U) Regarding diversity visas, fraud among Jordanian applicants is low. As Embassy Baghdad now handles its own Immigrant Visas, Embassy Amman did not process any Iraqi DVs during this reporting period.

ACS AND PASSPORT FRAUD

¶15. (U) Citizenship-based fraud in Amman appears to be very low and post has no cases to report this period. Because Jordan is a relatively easy country to access in the region, post accepts CRBA applications on behalf of other posts, to forward them to the correct post for adjudication. As a result, post handles West Bank and Gaza civil documents as well as Syrian civil documents on a regular basis.

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ADOPTION FRAUD

¶16. (U) Jordan is a Muslim country where Sharia courts have jurisdiction over family law. To legally adopt a child in Jordan, both parents must be practicing Muslims. Post did not detect any fraud in the one adoption visa issued during the last six months.

USE OF DNA TESTING

¶17. (U) Post did not process any immigrant visa case where applicants submitted DNA evidence during the past six months.

ASYLUM AND DHS BENEFIT FRAUD

¶18. (U) USCIS opened a Field Office in Amman in 2008 and they can be reached directly at uscis.amman@dhs.gov. USCIS (Fraud Detection and National Security) officials frequently request assistance from their field office in Amman for help confirming civil status on a variety of cases. During this reporting period, USCIS confirmed fraud in 7 of the 28 cases referred to Amman.

ALIEN SMUGGLING, TRAFFICKING, ORGANIZED CRIME,
TERRORIST TRAVEL

¶19. (U) Jordan is a major transit point in the Middle East for passengers heading to Europe and North America. Passengers from around the world can select from 15 weekly direct flights to the United States. Royal Jordanian Airlines flies directly to Chicago, Detroit, and New York. Delta Airlines began non-stop service from Amman to New York in June 2008.

¶20. (U) Jordan is a major transit country for narcotics in the region. Heroin and amphetamine trafficking occurs overland from both Israel and Lebanon destined for the Gulf States. Local officials estimate that only 15% of all narcotics trafficking is locally consumed. Cocaine trafficking occurs primarily via air passengers arriving at Queen Alia International Airport. GOJ officials report that the majority of narcotics couriers interdicted at the airport are internal body carriers from poor disenfranchised areas of South America.

¶21. (U) Jordan recently passed an Anti-Human-Trafficking law that officially criminalizes the act in a manner similar to U.S. standards. Security forces have received little training in combating this crime and current enforcement efforts are hampered by factional disagreements between the responsible agencies. There is limited local reporting on Human Smuggling and Trafficking in Jordan, specifically as it relates to the United States.

¶22. (U) Organized crime has begun to explore the feasibility of expanding their operations into Jordan, as evidenced by the arrest of 14 Romanian nationals in August 2009. The persons in question were part of an automatic teller machine (ATM) fraud scheme that stole credit/debit card information from victims through the use of a card reader affixed to the ATM. Jordanian officials deny the existence of organized crime, while also acknowledging that about 15 identified groups perpetuate most human and contraband smuggling in Jordan.

¶23. (U) Airline and immigration authorities at Amman's Queen Alia International Airport have intercepted altered, counterfeit and stolen blank passports from several European countries, as well as from Turkey, South Africa, Mexico, Chile, Venezuela, Lesotho, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, and India. Officials regularly detect fraudulent European residency permits and Schengen visas. Travelers presenting questionable documents hail from countries as diverse as Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, China, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Peru.

DS CRIMINAL FRAUD INVESTIGATIONS

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¶24. (U) Post conducted no criminal fraud investigations during this reporting period. Post has recently welcomed the arrival of an Assistant Regional Security Officer for Investigations (A/RSO-I). Consequently, the FPU is currently updating its procedures and work flow to reflect the new staffing pattern.

HOST COUNTRY PASSPORT, IDENTITY DOCUMENTS, AND CIVIL REGISTRY

¶25. (U) In July 2008, Jordan introduced a new K-series passport, similar to the J-series launched in May 2007. Previous passport versions remain valid until they expire. The 2008 version is machine-readable with enhanced technical specifications, but lacks biometric features. The new passport uses the same security film as the J-series, but with enhanced UV features. The new document cannot be extended when it expires. Although there are no reports of fraud involving counterfeit K-series passports, FPU has notified the Jordanian authorities regarding defects in the security film and photo security features. They are addressing the issue.

¶26. (U) In order to obtain a passport, children under 16 need to present a birth certificate and family book whereas an adult's

national ID card is sufficient evidence. Passport validity remains 5 years. Adults pay USD28.50 and children are half price. Authorities can provide same-day issuance for in-country applications. But outside of Jordan, the wait can exceed 45 days and cost twice the amount.

¶27. (U) Jordan's Civil Status and Passport Department issues birth certificates to Jordanians who are born abroad. However, the family must first register the birth with the host country to obtain a foreign birth certificate. This document is needed to obtain a Jordanian birth certificate. All births within Jordan have to be reported within one month to the civil authorities. If a Jordanian is born overseas, the birth has to be reported within 90 days. A birth certificate costs \$1.40 (one dinar).

COOPERATION WITH HOST GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

¶28. (U) FPU maintains a strong relationship with Jordanian government and airport officials who routinely report fraud incidents and vulnerabilities to the embassy. Similarly, Amman's Fraud Control Group, comprised of North American and European fraud prevention officials, shares information and trends formally on a monthly basis, but informally through regular phone calls and e-mails. The group focuses primarily on Iraqi-related fraud and also holds joint training and informational sessions on Iraqi adjudication and verification issues.

AREAS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN

¶29. (U) Amman routinely screens all Iraqi civil documents (i.e., passport, national i.d. card, and certificate of citizenship) for almost all IV and NIV cases. Post is concerned that Iraqi document fraud is becoming increasingly more sophisticated. Since 2007, FPU has noted certain Iraqi ID cards that appear to have been produced fraudulently on a large scale and from a single source. Posts may want to pay close attention to Iraqi ID cards. For more details, please e-mail Amman FPU.

¶30. (U) On several occasions, post has received e-mails alerting the U.S. Government that Middle Easterners working for the USG in Iraq can easily purchase a full set of Iraqi civil documents in order to apply for SIV or other immigration benefits. Among a myriad of other fraud detection techniques, FPU has alerted Post's locally-engaged staff to advise Consular Officers when any Iraqi applies who lacks an Iraqi accent. During this reporting period, FPU conducted additional screening to one SIV applicant to ascertain his country of origin, which FPU confirmed as Iraqi.

¶31. (U) Amman informed DHS in 2008 that Iraqi citizens born abroad who acquire Iraqi citizenship at birth have valid Iraqi passports indicating their place of birth is Baghdad. (See CBP's Fraudulent Document Analysis Unit Bulletin of August 2008 for more information.) The applicant presents a valid birth certificate showing birth outside of Iraq and a passport that reads Baghdad as the place of birth. Consular officials adhere to the passport's

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POB, but annotate the visa to read: "Actual POB: City, Country."

STAFFING AND TRAINING

¶32. (U) The FPU is staffed by one Foreign Service Officer Fraud Prevention Manager, one Assistant Regional Security Officer for Investigations and one full-time LES Fraud Specialist. FPU works closely with Post's Visa Security Unit (DHS/ICE). Please contact AmmanFPU@state.gov for information or assistance.

¶33. (U) The LES Fraud Prevention Specialist has completed Department of State fraud prevention training in Washington and forensic document lab training sponsored by the Anti-Terrorism

Assistance program. He trains all incoming consular personnel and shares his expertise with Jordanian and other fraud prevention officials in Amman and the region. In addition, he regularly provides training in examining Iraqi civil documents and overall fraud detection techniques to Baghdad consular personnel transiting through Amman.

¶34. (U) Both the Fraud Prevention Manager and Assistant Regional Security Officer for Investigations have completed FSI's course for Fraud Prevention Managers and the Advanced Namechecking Course.

BEECROFT